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CHALLENGE



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COAST-TO-COAST MULTIRACIAL UNITY AGAINST RACISM





At the latest protest: antiracists chant "Killer cops!" and surround every cop car pulling out of the police station.

LOS ANGELES, February 5–"When the working class is under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!" The fight back in Los Angeles this time took the form of a documentary screening and forum against police brutality. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) brought two families together from both coasts to demonstrate the power of multi-racial unity in the fight against racism. The importance of this unity cannot be overstated. Without it, the working class is fragmented and weak. With it, we can smash capitalism for good!

With string lighting and fancy hors d'oeuvres courtesy of the mass organization connections of a comrade, the space looked more like a chic art gallery than a forum on police brutality. But as 85 multi-racial, multi-generational, workers and students filed in, it was clear that everyone meant business. We were all there to unite against police brutality and more importantly how to change this racist system that relies on it to control our class.

Justice for Alex Flores

Only under capitalism can a simple phone call to the police about a concern surrounding a minor altercation end in the murder of someone. That's exactly what happened to Alex Flores on the morning of November 19, 2019 when he was savagely gunned down by KKKiller cop Steven Ruiz in a South Central neighborhood. Since that date, the family, community members, and members of PLP have held dozens of marches from the site of the shooting to the Newton police station to demand justice.

Throughout that fightback, PLP has reminded the family that every 12 hours someone is murdered by the police. The importance of that discussion has always been to identify the systemic nature of police murders and communism as the only way to achieve true justice. PLP members also told the family of all the organizing we have done against police murder on the east coast and offered to connect them with those struggles.

After two months of PLP organizing with the family of Alex Flores around their fight for justice, we were now able to start to build the coast to coast ties. While planning the event with the family, they wanted to bring more awareness to what happened to Alex, but reiterated multiple times, they didn't want this to just be about Alex, but rather "all the stolen lives." Every day this family sees more and more how capitalism robs the working class of our humanity and the only antidote is to unite and overthrow this system.

Police murder means fight back

PLP's strategy for mobilizing with the family comes from decades of experience of doing this kind of work. The connections we have made with other victims families of police brutality from the Bronx, to Brooklyn to Baltimore, and more supported the struggle here and reinforced the resounding call that "an injustice to one is an injustice to all." So when the family member of a police brutality victim from New York is willing to fly across the country to show support to the family of Alex Flores and represent PLP and the work we do in the process, it reminds us that our currently small organization has a much wider reach than we often recognize. In fact, our friend from NYC invited two friends and activists living in LA to our event, introducing them to the Party.

After watching the infuriating, yet inspirational, film "Profiled" which spotlights two families who lost people to the murderous 68th Precinct in Brooklyn, NY, we hosted a panel discussion session. Panel members gave detailed accounts about organizing justice for Alex Flores, Brendon Glenn (a homeless man killed by LAPD on Venice Beach) and others murdered by the KKKops.

The important point was made that we cannot rely on having Black and Latin workers as police, judges, mayors, district attorneys, etc. The cop who killed Shantel Davis is Black. The cop who killed Alex Flores is Latin. The LA district attorney, Jackie Lacey, a Black woman, has not indicted a single cop for murder even though roughly 400 people have been killed by LAPD during her eight years in office (The Guardian, 8/24/18). All these people, regardless of skin color, uphold the system of capitalism that continues to brutalize us.

Through the discussion, a Black student/worker and friend reminded the crowd that capitalism will always take back reforms we fight for, so we can never stop fighting to change the system. A 15-year-old Latin student called out the imperialist nature of the United States and another attendee compared the police in our communities to the U.S. military presence in other countries.

One question from the floor was "when is it ok to call the police when you feel unsafe?" The overwhelming consensus of the room was "NEVER."\ Instead, several proposals from the panel and the floor were for taking care of each other and our communities ourselves and that if we lived in a more communist society, we certainly wouldn't have to fear our own class brothers and sisters.

Onward to May Day

At the end of the night, there was a tremendous feeling of power and desire to get more involved in the fight back. A young Latin mental health care worker found the event inspiring and was blown away by the amount of organizing in the community happening. People took buttons and signed up to attend upcoming rallies and marches. This forum is just one step to making the police killing of Alex Flores a more mass issue. As we shared stories of fighting back against police terror across the country, we showed the family a vision of where their struggle can go and how it can be expanded.

We have a long way to go to get the participants to take the step of joining the PLP in the fight for communism, but this forum was a small step in that struggle. We will continue to organize with the Flores family. Our next major call is for a May Day march through the neighborhood and to report at the May Day dinner of all the fight back between now and then. The struggle for communism continues! Join us!✪

OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Coronavirus, an opening for fascism and war

The outbreak of the latest coronavirus, 2019-nCoV, is a health crisis for the working class, a fascist tool for the Chinese bosses, and a racist opportunity for a deteriorating U.S. to attack their top imperialist rival.

What the world's workers need is a revolutionary communist party. Progressive Labor Party fights to make something unthinkable under capitalism into reality: a system run solely in the interests of the working class. A world where public health will be protected without the barriers of money or profit.

Fascism, the real contagion

Capitalist China has responded to the new coronavirus with intensifying fascism, a form of capitalism in crisis. Under president-for-life Xi Jinping, the Chinese bosses are centralizing their power through their state apparatus: the government, the police, the media. Their goal is to pacify, divide, and terrorize the working class.

In much of China, everyday life has come to a halt. After first downplaying the outbreak and punishing eight doctors who warned about the virus, the rulers quarantined (read: imprisoned) some 50 million in Wuhan and nearby cities. (By comparison, the New York City metropolitan area has about 20 million people). Schools, businesses, theaters, temples, and restaurants are shut down. Supply trucks, with drivers in masks and protective suits, must pass through tightly controlled checkpoints. Police segregate people with fevers. All in all, it's "the biggest quarantine in history…The impact of such draconian measures has rippled throughout China" (Economist, 1/30).

The Chinese state did what capitalists do best: turn a problem into an Orwellian exercise to ratchet up surveillance of the working class: "Those who have recently been to Wuhan are being tracked, monitored, turned away from hotels and placed into isolation at their homes and in makeshift quarantine facilities" (AP News, 1/30). The government is also publicly urging workers to inform on each other and leak personal data (New York Times, 2/3).

Under the pretext of safety, these tracking and policing measures are in actuality a practice drill for socially controlling the working class and intimidating them into obedience. Similar methods, and the mentality they create, will be useful to the Chinese bosses in a future war against the U.S.

Viral warfare

The world's driving force today is inter-imperialist rivalry, chiefly between China, Russia, and the U.S. All world problems reflect this contradiction.As national rulers drive to dominate their regions and control areas of crucial strategic importance, like the Middle East or Africa, the delicate balance of the old liberal world order will inevitably give way to global war.

To distract U.S. workers from obscene capitalist inequality and poverty and the political disorder in their own house (see page 5), bellicose U.S. bosses are taking every opportunity to attack China. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called out China as "the central threat of our times," part of a campaign to pressure U.S. allies to stop collaborating with Chinese tech giant Huawei (NYT, 1/30).

The coronavirus and mass quarantine could not only "spark China's first recession-like experience" (Reuters, 2/4), but also renew its prolonged trade war with the U.S. As a result of depressed growth, China may be unable to meet its commitment to buy $200 billion in additional U.S. imports over the next two years (South China Morning Post, 1/29).

Meanwhile, U.S. rulers are busy using the outbreak to their competitive advantage. In banning non-U.S. residents who have traveled to China from entering the U.S., the bosses exceeded recommendations by the World Health Organization (U.S. News, 2/3). And leave it to the capitalists to find a bright side to a growing epidemic: U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross predicted that 2019-nCoV "would cause companies to reconsider their global supply chains and ultimately 'help to accelerate' the return of jobs to the United States" (NYT, 1/30).

Facts about 2019-nCoV

The source and severity of 2019-nCoV have yet to be confirmed. The current fatality rate is 2 percent, as compared to more than 9 percent for the SARS virus (Marketwatch, 2/4). Most deaths are in people with weakened immune systems. There is as yet no vaccine.

The World Health Organization, an arm of the U.S. world order, has declared the coronavirus a global health emergency. As we go to press, the official death toll stands at around 500, with tens of thousands of infections confirmed across 27 countries.

Objectively, the common flu is a far greater threat to workers. It "causes up to 5 million cases of severe illness globally and kills up to 650,000 people annually" (The Hill, 1/27)

Even as they kick China while it's down, these bosses have no leg to stand on when it comes to public health. "In 2017-18 a bad flu season saw symptoms in 45 [million] Americans, and 61,000 deaths" (Economist, 1/30). That doesn't even factor in the death toll of everyday systemic racism. Ask a Black worker or youth about the medical apartheid in this former enslaver state.

The disease of racism

Universities and news media, agents of disinformation for the ruling class, are seizing the opportunity to infect workers with anti-Chinese racism. "Yellow Alert," read a French newspaper headline. From Australia's Daily Telegraph: "China kids stay home." Shops across Southeast Asia barred entry to Chinese tourists. Canadian parents petitioned to keep students who'd recently visited China out of school. At Arizona State University, students left the classroom when an Asian student sat near them (Washington Post, 2/1).

Anti-Asian racism in the U.S. has historically been a tool of division and war. When Chinese migrants were recruited to build the railroads and mine for gold in the late 1800s, they were superexploited and scapegoated. In the Chinese Massacre of 1871 in Los Angeles, a mob mutilated and lynched 18 men and boys, 10 percent of the city's Chinese immigrant population (Los Angeles Public Library). During World War II, the U.S. funneled more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry into concentration camps.

Workers and youth must fight for multiracial unity in the face of racist ideas wherever they appear.

Communism, the best medicine

All "natural" diseases are in fact caused by capitalism. Communism would eliminate the underlying causes that breed infectious disease, mainly unhealthy working and living conditions. It would use science to handle unforeseen outbreaks in the interest of the masses.

The Chinese Revolution eliminated diseases like syphilis and schistosomiasis. It trained masses of "barefoot doctors" and sent them to the countryside to treat curable illnesses. In just ten years, China doubled workers' life expectancy and halved infant mortality, the greatest public health gains in history! By organizing the masses, the Chinese Communist Party put an end to famine, female infanticide, foot binding, prostitution, malnutrition, and illiteracy, all previously facts of life for workers and peasants for centuries.

Unfortunately, the Chinese bosses' abandonment of communist goals and the pursuit of capitalist profit have eroded those landmark advances.

Progressive Labor Party is fighting for a society run by and for the international working class. Freed from profits or bosses, a communist society will organize resources—scientific data, food, water, housing, technology—for the benefit of our class. Join us as we fight to eradicate capitalism, the greatest disease plaguing the working class.✪

Shut down racist police, keep hospital open!

BRONX, January 20 –On Martin Luther King day (MLK day) the interfaith coalition joined with a Black church in the Bronx for the third year to emphasize the struggle aspect of MLK day. Antiracists workers in this mass organization, and members of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) packed the church's basement with a multiracial crowd, young and old, eager to learn from our panel of experienced organizers. The presenters clearly described the racist horror of police killings nationally, the scandal of Columbia Presbyterian's attempt to close the Allen Hospital Psychiatric service, the life and death need to expand mental health services, and the campaign to stop cops from being the first responders to calls for people in mental crisis.

Surely the future must hold an egalitarian, communist world with medical care, food, housing and all basic needs available equally to all. That's when the working class runs all aspects of society. In the meantime we organize to fight back against the capitalists who are mainly concerned with profits.

Cops hail from slave system

How cops respond to people in mental crisis is a racist horror. The Washington Post and the The Guardian estimate that uniformed, armed cops kill roughly 1,000 victims annually. Almost half are Black, Latin, or Indigenous, and fully half are people suffering mental crisis. Weekly friends ask, "Why are cops allowed to administer this racist carnage?" Why are they "out of control?"



We answer that they are, in fact, very much "in control!"From their origins in the slavery enforcing murder squads, police have always served the fundamental needs of the U.S. ruling class. Now more than ever racist intimidation is vital to forestall any multiracial rebellion that could threaten the critical need of the U.S. to militarize to counter the ascendancy of other international imperialists, principally China, that are moving to become the Top Dog Imperialist. Knowing that this process is leading to World War III, the capitalist rulers depend on racist cop forces to terrorize and control the working class domestically as these bosses mobilize to defend U.S. imperialism globally. These cops provide the front line warriors nationally to promote fascism at home.

As empowering as our speakers were, an important part of the program came at the end when PLP challenged our friends, new and old, to sign on to weekly activity. Twenty three agreed to work together to save and expand Allen Psych services and to barrage the New York City Council demanding hearings and legislation to stop cops as first responders to calls for people in mental crisis and to expand mental health services sufficiently to meet a critically growing need. This was an important albeit small victory of the day.

Of course, the most important victory will emerge as we share CHALLENGE, issue by issue, with our new coworkers and convince them to march on May Day with us, grow closer to the Progressive Labor Party with us, and build the world wide movement to smash death dealing imperialism finally with world wide communist revolution!✪

KKKop murders William; workers gear up to fight

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, February 5–Another police murder of a Black man happened just as the Community Justice Coalition (CJC) in Prince George's County, MD was holding a conference call about police brutality! 43-year-old William (Boo) Green was another slain victim of racist capitalism. Only a revolution against the whole damn profit system can begin to end such racism, since it is needed by capitalism to intimidate, control, and subject us all to intense exploitation. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members participate in the CJC to help sharpen the struggle against racism and to bring more anti-racist fighters into the communist movement.

Racist killer cop Owen

Boo banged into some parked cars in Temple Hills, MD, and the police put him in handcuffs (behind his back) and strapped him into the front seat of a police cruiser. Then Cpl. Michael Owen, a Black cop, shot seven times, fatally striking him, demonstrating that all cops carry out racist attacks. This same pig had killed another Black Prince George's County resident in 2011! The police chief, Henry Stawinksi, and his top cops huddled and put out the lie that Boo was on PCP, but once they saw that local residents had cell phone videos that showed no resistance by him, or erratic behavior, they realized they had to change their story. They charged pig Owen with 2nd degree murder, manslaughter, and weapons violations (Washington Post, 2/4/). We'll see if there is truly any accountability for this racist murder.



Capitalist racism: little changes in 27 years

This incident was just like an earlier police murder that PLP fought against–Artie Elliott in 1993 was handcuffed behind his back in a police cruiser and then murdered in a hail of bullets from two cops. So little change, after two Department of Justice consent decrees with the county, and a parade of "reforming" police chiefs! It takes a revolution, not some bogus reform, to end such racist police behavior.

Emergency meetup in response to Boo's murder

We held an emergency meeting via conference call to consider a course of action in response to Boo's murder. It turns out that a leader of the CJC grew up with him, bringing home how police violence harms us all. Coalition members had lots of recommendations, from encouraging an uprising against the police state violence to a renewed circulation of our petition demanding the firing of Chief Stawinski. A PLP member recommended we take to the streets with a bullhorn rally near the site of the murder to swell the ranks of our modest organization.

At our follow up meeting, another case of racist police action came to us. In this case, cops with guns drawn burst into a Black couple's home, failed to identify themselves, poked around the house while the wife told them to get out and that they had no right to search her house. The terror felt by her and her husband is a prime example of how routine aggressive racist behavior is intended to intimidate and control Black working class people, all in the service of helping capitalists achieve maximum profits through the exploitation of the working class as a whole.

The fightback will continue!✪

Mexico rulers attack migrants, protect imperialist agenda

The Mexican National Guard, once again, repressed a caravan of Honduran migrants by badly beating them and firing tear gas at them. The migrants were trying to cross the border between Guatemala and Mexico. Several were arrested and deported, some managed to escape to the mountains where they will face other dangers. With this action the Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) government and the liberals in the ruling class which he represents are essentially outlawing working class migration. It also reveals that capitalism in crisis will always resort to fascism despite the appearance of a so-called transformative populist change.

Migration is caused by capitalist inequality that condemns millions of workers to misery, exploitation and violence. These workers are forced to leave their places of origin with the false hope of improving their situation or escaping the danger of gangs or cartels, but capitalism attacks workers in every corner of the world. In more developed countries, they reach a dead end, where they are victims of racism, super-exploitation, and even slavery.

The only escape from this criminal system is a communist revolution to achieve a society organized and led by the workers. One that is based on the social needs of the majority of the working population and not of a rapacious minority of capitalist bosses.

It should be remembered that the creation of the National Guard was to support public safety.

We know that is just the cover for the Mexican bosses' true intentions. Ever since the previous President's administration, the center-right Calderon, the bosses have tried to pass the internal security law. This would give their army the right to act as police forces within the country's territory.

The National Gaurd (GN) operates through a permanent Council chaired by the Secretary of Public Security, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy, appointed by the President. In general terms, its structure is completely military. This Council has the power to evaluate and shape action strategies, to designate commands, among other things, and to guarantee the safety of citizens. However, due to its structure, it is not accountable to the Federal Government.

All of this is worsened by the approval of another law that facilitates the use of lethal force. So that, now, what has been created is a political police force with repressive duties aimed against the working class. Before the approval of this law, the decision on the use of lethal force was based on repelling attacks. That is, they could only fire after being attacked. Now, they can attack even without being completely sure that the people are armed. Previously, during Peña Nieto's term, the army was investigated for attacking people who they could not prove were armed. Under these fascist AMLO laws, they face no investigation threats!

AMLO: imperialist servant

As a good liberal, López Obrador feints with the left and hits with the right. He presents himself as a protector of migrants and represses them with thousands of National Guard elements deployed on the border with Guatemala. Now, the southern part of the country has a greater police and military presence, even more than the northern part of the country where crime is greater. The reason for all these troops, besides attacking migrants, is to protect AMLO's main mega-projects: the interoceanic corridor, the Mayan train, the three-mouth refinery, and the program sowing life.

The corridor is a project long desired by the U.S. bosses and now the Chinese bosses are also interested. The armed forces are deployed in this area to contain social movements against these megaprojects and apparently in the north the containment is left to the paramilitary force of the criminal gangs.

Obrador has taken advantage of his enormous political support to realize the plans of the national capitalists and imperialists, but the worst damage has been the demobilization of social struggles. No protest has arisen from the repression of migrants. The right supports the attacks and the left keeps a complicit silence. Progressive Labor Party calls on workers to protest against fascist repression and organize our only way out: communist revolution.✪

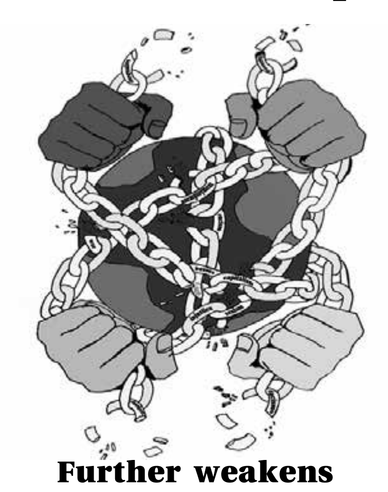
Trump's Israeli apartheid plan weakens U.S. Imperialism

On January 28, U.S. President Donald Trump, flanked by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, unveiled an Israeli/Palestinian "peace" plan. The plan gives Israel significant parts of the West Bank and control of most of Jerusalem. It legalizes illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory, gives Palestinian refugees no right of return and gives Israel security control over some future Palestinian state. None of the capitalists competing for power in the Middle East accept this plan. More chaos and war is in store for the region, with workers dying for the bosses" profits. The Progressive Labor Party (PLP)organizes to turn these imperialist wars into working class wars against all capitalist bosses.

On Dec 22, 2017 a CHALLENGE editorial stated "U.S. President Trump's recent move to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital was a holiday gift to the Israeli ruling class, a big-power blessing of the country's anti-Arab racism and apartheid, and a reflection of the embattled U.S. bosses' growing isolation in the region and the world. It would also lead to even more instability in the Middle East, collateral damage to U.S. allies, and a rise in mass anger and fight-back against the U.S."

Trump's latest "peace" plan is more of the same. This time it is more specifically a gift to the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who is facing corruption and fraud charges in Israel. It is also a ploy by Trump to appeal to his racist, Zionist and evangelical base as he faces impeachment and a coming election.

Since recognizing Jerusalem as the Israeli capital the U.S. killed the Iranian general Suleimani in Iraq and an Iranian missile strike seriously injured 30 U.S. soldiers, bringing the U.S. and Iran to the brink of war. Then masses of Iranians and Iraqis demonstrated against the U.S. and the Iraqi Parliament voted to kick the U.S. military out of Iraq. The instability and fightback that CHALLENGE predicted continues.



Further weakens U.S. imperialism

Indeed "mass anger and fight-back against the U.S." is increasing and the imperialist wing of the U.S. ruling class is losing control in the Middle East. Their allies are wavering. The European Union and the United Nations both came out in opposition to Trump's plan. Then so did the African Union and the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Al Jazeera, 2/4). The ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan did not attend the unveiling of the "peace" plan (NYT, 1/28).

But Sheldon Adelson and Jared Kushner were there. The Kushner family has major investments in Israeli settlements (Real Clear Politics, 12/6/19). Adelson is a billionaire, Zionist supporter of Israel and Trump. He is aligned with the more domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who want low taxes and less regulation of business.

Israel: birthed by imperialism, raised by apartheid

This imperialist control of and competition over Palestine started in 1948 when the new Israeli state murdered or expelled over 750,000 Palestinians, 85 percent of the population. In 1967 they took over more territory and left only 22 percent of the land in Palestinian hands, albeit occupied, and exerted complete militarily control over 30 percent of the territory and nearly all of its water, its borders, and security. The West Bank (WB) has now been illegally militarily occupied for 53 years. Military incursions into Gaza have killed over 7,000 since 2000, wounded thousands more, and left that area "uninhabitable," according to the United Nations. The 20 percent of Israeli citizens who are Palestinians have markedly fewer rights than Jewish workers. By declarating itself a "Jewish State" in 2018, Israel has officially adopted apartheid.

Reject the bosses' nationalism

Thousands of Palestinians have demonstrated against this "peace" plan, but their leaders are corrupt. The Palestinian Authority represents the small, ruling capitalist elite in the West Bank, where inequality is as great as in the U.S. It has a long history of cooperating with Israel to suppress dissent. Hamas is a fundamentalist party that rules Gaza and gains some support by inciting doomed armed actions against Israel.

Need Black-Arab-Jewish working class unity

Workers in Israel also suffer, with shortages of housing, jobs, and good schools. Yet Israelis are blinded by racism against Arab workers, especially Black immigrants. Meanwhile Palestinians are bombarded with nationalism, loyalty to the unity of all Palestinians regardless of their class. Many focus on desiring unity between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority and having their own state. As in all capitalist states, workers are misled by nationalism or patriotism- loyalty to local rulers, instead of allegiance to the international working class. The only hope for all workers in the Middle East is to build an international communist movement of Arab and Jewish workers to unite with workers around the world to overthrow imperialist capitalism. Join the Progressive Labor Party as we fight for an egalitarian, communist world.✪

Impeachment

Capitalist democracy in disarray, fascism on the horizon

The impeachment acquittal of openly corrupt U.S. President Donald Trump has exposed the disarray of the finance capitalist section of the U.S. ruling class. Overwhelmed by self-interest and chaotic infighting, these main-wing Big Fascists have lost significant control over their state apparatus and institutions. With growing threats to their power and profits, the bosses will be forced to impose fascist discipline on their own ranks—followed by even sharper and more deadly attacks on the working class.



A fraudulent system

The doomed impeachment effort by the Big Fascists' Democratic Party was driven by the demands of big donors loyal to arch-racists Bill and Hillary Clinton. This group is still furious over Hillary Clinton's loss to Trump in the 2016 election. The Democrats focused on Trump's pressure on the president of Ukraine to get dirt on Joe Biden, the one-time vice president and hack U.S. senator who's now running another hapless campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. The Republicans focused on Biden protecting his parasite son, Hunter, who skimmed millions as a do-nothing director of the biggest Ukrainian natural gas company. Each side accused the other of shameless corruption and of tearing apart the country for political gain. Neither side was wrong.

This partisan mud-throwing splattered the most hallowed institutions of U.S. liberal "democracy," the bosses' capitalist dictatorship: the Presidency, the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Supreme Court. The rulers' fraudulent electoral system—after yet another fiasco in the Iowa primary — has likewise been exposed. The Republicans, terrified of losing Trump's white nationalist base, couldn't even pretend to make the impeachment process seem fair or legitimate. They refused to hear witnesses like former national security chief John Bolton, who's cashing in with a book that confirms Trump's "high crimes and misdemeanors." The pro-acquittal Republians argued that presidents can do almost anything they want, even if it means illegally undermining an ally (Ukraine) by withholding military aid. So much for the "rule of law" under capitalism!

The main wing bosses are up against it. They desperately need to unify the U.S. and prepare for the coming global conflict against their inter-imperialist rivals, China and Russia. But they're also fighting a two-front war of their own. On one side, they're facing a rising challenge from the domestically oriented bosses, the Small Fascists, who have hijacked the Republican Party. On the other, the Big Fascists and their Democratic Party have deep internal problems: internecine warfare, individualism, subjectivity, greed, and a self-destructive lack of discipline and long-term thinking.

Self-dealers and capitalist reformers

Joe Biden's whole career has been based on selling his votes in Congress to serve the credit card, health care, oil, real estate, and Wall Street bosses (Guardian, 1/20). While everyone knows that's just business as usual in Washington, Biden is now straining to reinvent himself as a working-class champion who will clean up Trump's corruption.

Meanwhile, the Clintons and the old Democratic Party power structure—including Barack and Michelle Obama, who have raked in $40 million since leaving the White House—are busy sabotaging the main wing's long-term interests. Instead of using the primaries to unite the Democratic Party against Trump, they have turned it into a war on Biden's behalf against social democrat Bernie Sanders. Beyond Hillary Clinton's open sniping, the old guard is conspiring to rig the primary process against the fake-left Sanders, as it did in 2016: "Democratic operatives have been in discussions about putting together an effort to attack Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) should he end up winning this week's Iowa caucus and, potentially, the New Hampshire primary a week later" (Daily Beast, 1/27).

While Sanders may not be the Big Fascists' first choice for president, he just might be their best shot to regain control. With the possible exception of Elizabeth Warren, he's the capitalist reformer best equipped to keep anti-racist workers and youth trapped inside the bosses' dead-end electoral system—the same people the rulers will need for their next big war. Sanders leads all candidates, including Trump, in fundraising among suburban women, active-duty military, and college students. He is the only presidential candidate mobilizing significant numbers of young Black and Latin workers. Openly cheating Sanders and further alienating his base is a losing strategy for the main wing.

Even if they manage to overcome their divisions and beat Trump in November, the main wing bosses will still be challenged by Trump's Small Fascist base. It will be very difficult for the rulers to win back these open racists while trying to build a multicultural, imperialist campaign.

Fighting Fascism

In the short term, the impeachment farce highlights the main wing's weaknesses. In the longer term, it marks a significant step toward fascism. As the rules of liberal democracy lose their legitimacy, it will be even easier for the finance capital Big Fascists to suspend them the next time—when it suits their purpose. Raw power is becoming the new normal. In the 1930s, as the German ruling class moved toward fascism, their system saw similar infighting. In a massacre now known as The Night of the Long Knives, they settled their factional differences through mass arrests and executions. Then came the fascist deluge against the working class.

Progressive Labor Party must prepare ourselves and the international working class for the next fascist onslaught. That means mounting the struggle wherever we are, among the people we know, to build PLP and seize state power with communist revolution. Join us!✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



Vigil against sexist violence

I recently attended a vigil that was held by workers at a city hospital in honor of the victims of domestic abuse killed by intimate partners. An employee at the nearby hospital spoke of how abuse against women was more than just an issue between two people. It was a systemic problem that needs to be addressed by people with power in government and by the general public.

I added to that by pointing out that under capitalism, sexism must thrive in order to keep women, a valuable labor resource for bosses world-wide, terrorized and under control. I identified myself as a communist and said that although many abusers were themselves victims of abuse, our primary concern must be protecting people currently being terrorized.

This work must be done by working-class people, as we cannot rely on cops or the courts in this capitalist system to do it. The only reason some laws have changed is due to the actions of people, led by women who experienced these horrors, and their support collectives. These comments were very well received, and led to Progressive Labor Party members talking to people further as we socialized after the gathering.

Violence against women, and sexism over all, is a tool of the capitalist class that we have to attack openly and with other workers. To eliminate sexism means we must fight for communist revolution!

★★★★★

New PL'er explains inter-imperialist rivalry

Around 15 people have been participating in a study group, including Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades and friends. A young comrade who recently joined our Party made a successful report on the international situation and the danger of an imminent war. He explained that this threat of war is based on the selfishness and greed of the imperialist superpowers and their need to control more territory and greater wealth.

The internal situation within the most powerful empire in the world (the United States) was also discussed and analyzed. There is a major clash between the domestic-minded Small Fascists and the international-minded liberals (the Big Fascists) of the Democratic Party. This clash is playing out right now with U.S. President Donald Trump's impeachment.

There were many questions and much discussion by those who attended with very accurate analyses. The level of awareness that the working class is acquiring is increasingly important for understanding everything that is happening worldwide, including climate change.

One of the participating friends proposed working with another committee to plan a forum in our community organization as soon as possible, where we would present political topics. We will discuss much of what is happening between the Big and Small fascists around the world, explaining how it affects the entire working class in order to raise the level of consciousness of ourselves as workers.

We need to win more of us workers to fight for the line that only a united, revolutionary and militant working class, led by a mass PLP, can lead us along the path of revolution to the seizure of state power from the bosses and the construction of a communist society that brings equality for all.

★★★★★



Stalingrad: communists defeated the fascists

Continued from page 8

It was in that city that workers, men and women, were won to the necessity of defending their new workers' society. They voluntarily remained at their machines making tanks for the battlefield just outside their factory while bombs fell all around them. If ever an example is needed of the communist spirit, it is Stalingrad. These defenders had courage, sacrifice, determination and camaraderie–what a boundless sea of what's best in humanity! The Soviets destroyed three fascist armies, causing 1.5 million Nazi casualties." (CHALLENGE Supplement, May 17, 1995.)

During the entire World War II, more than 70 percent of the active fascist troops in Europe were fighting the Red Army. While the U.S. and British imperialists' initial strategy was to wait it out and to come in for a quick victory, the Red Army and the communist-led partisans actually fought fascism.

Fight fascism with communism

When the Allies landed in Normandy in 1944, only three Nazi divisions faced them, because more than 100 Nazi divisions from all over Europe had to be rushed to Belarus and the South Ukraine where the Red Army had crushed all the fascist forces.

The Red Army, organized and led by communists, smashed the Nazi and fascist forces. The Soviet working class and Bolshevik Party saved the world from fascism! All this was accomplished under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. No wonder he is hated and lied about by world capitalism's fakers to this day.

Unfortunately, due to internal weaknesses, the world communist movement turned away from the goal of overthrowing capitalism through revolution and from reliance on the working class. After Stalin's death in 1953, under phony communist leadership, Soviet leaders introduced more and more capitalist economic policies. These gradually eroded the foundations of the world communist movement, turning the Soviet Union into just another state capitalist and imperialist power.

Nevertheless, the defeat of fascism in World War II by the working class should inspire us with confidence in the working class, whose best is brought out by communist leadership. Let us take a long, hard look at each other and ourselves, correct our weaknesses and fight harder against the class enemy.

We have many battles to fight in an uphill struggle if humanity is to be liberated from racism, imperialist war and capitalist oppression. But fight these battles we must if we want an egalitarian society and carry on the legacy of our Soviet comrades of the Second World War.

The Bolshevik Revolution

The Bolshevik Revolution of November 7, 1917, is the most important single event of the 20th century. The working class across Russia, allied with the oppressed peasants, seized state power and held it for decades. The Bolshevik Party (name of the Communist Party of Russia) led the workers and peasants to defeat Russian and foreign armies that tried to overthrow them in a hard-fought four-year civil war (1917-1921).

From 1921 to 1941, the Bolsheviks – now under the leadership of Joseph Stalin – ended many remnants of capitalism, and collectivized agriculture to stop the endless series of devastating famines.

They outlawed racism! Black intellectuals from the U.S. like poet Langston Hughes, actor and singer Paul Robeson, and many others, praised the racial egalitarianism of the Soviet government and workers. The Bolsheviks also led the Communist Party USA to make the fight against racism primary in all its struggles, a pillar that PLP continues and advances today. ✪

Mark Shapiro, a communist for all seasons

Comrade Mark Shapiro, one of the original members of the Progressive Labor Movement (PLM) and the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), died on January 12 at 78. Mark was a communist whose life and influence spread throughout the working class and encompassed both mental and manual labor. Married to Ann, a PLP comrade, Mark was a General Motors auto worker, a railroad brakeman, a high school and college teacher, a father to Daniel and David, a grandfather to four grandchildren and a father to two foster daughters, a musician who belonged to several bands and played the clarinet — his high school yearbook portrayed him as the "Benny Goodman of Weaver High." Being a "birder" he and his wife Ann led the Hartford, Connecticut Audobon Society, while serving as a political leader among hundreds of workers and youth. Truly a communist "for all seasons."

Perhaps Mark's most significant contribution to the working class was his uncovering of one of the most vicious racist frame-ups of the 1960s, the George Whitmore case. The U.S. Supreme Court cited it as "the most conspicuous example of police coercion in the country" in its 1966 decision which became known as the Miranda ruling, to possibly protect those arrested from being coerced into false confessions.

After his auto and railroad jobs, and having obtained a Masters degree in physics at Columbia University, Mark began teaching science in New Jersey and later moved to Connecticut where he taught physics at Wesleyan University among other colleges in the area and social studies at Trinity College and Prince Tech.

He had been born into a communist family in Albany N.Y. His parents had been blacklisted during the McCarthy witchhunts. This background led him to join Progressive Labor Movement in 1963 and later the Progressive Labor Party (PLP). Mark became a member of PLM's first trade union club and of the staff of CHALLENGE. He put his great sense of humor to work, writing the paper's first humor column, "Marksmanship." Years later his son said he liked to brag that the first big anti-Vietnam War protest in New York City was organized in his living room

Mark exposes the racist frame-up of George Whitmore

On August 28, 1963, two white professional women were murdered in Manhattan which the media labeled the "Career Girl Murders." At that very moment George Whitmore, a young Black man, was in Wildwood, N.J. sitting with a dozen friends watching Marin Luther King make his famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the March on Washington. Whitmore had been previously acquitted of a frame-up by racist cops of a murder in Brownsville, Brooklyn. But the cops went after him again and arrested him for the murders of these two women. The cops wrote a 61-page "confession" and beat him into signing it. A Manhattan District Attorney joined in the frame-up and a judge sent the youth to Rikers Island for a "psychiatric" examination. The bosses' press — 10 New York City newspapers at the time — lept on the case with ranting front-page "stories" smearing Whitmore as a "Black killer."



Mark Shapiro fought for Trade Unions, Justice for George Whitmore, and communist revoloution.

At the very same time a civil liberties advocate, John Lawrence, who worked for a law firm, had decided to test a law by striding down Broadway in Manhattan carrying an unloaded rifle in full view, hoping to be arrested to create a test case in court. Sure enough the cops arrested him and a judge sent him to Rikers for an "examination." He ended up in the same area as Whitmore. Lawrence had heard of Whitmore and they began talking.

Whitmore detailed to Lawrence about where he was in Wildwood, N.J. watching King's speech on TV when the murders were committed. When Lawrence was released, he went to every newspaper in the city with his "scoop" and every paper refused to publish it, given that it exposed the racist trash they had been printing.

Lawrence then consulted the "newspaper" listing in the telephone yellow pages and saw "CHALLENGE." He came to our office to see if we would print the story. Mark met him, listened to what he had to say and began writing a series for CHALLENGE recounting his interviews with Lawrence exposing the racist frame-up. None of the city's press pursued it but some out-of-town newspapers picked it up, never mentioning Mark's reporting, of course. It became the story of the year, similar to the more recent racist "Central Park Five" frame-ups. Seven years later Telly Savalas made a TV movie dramatizing the case entitled "The Marcus-Nelson Murders," only the second Kojak production.

Mark and Ann raised their family in Bloomfield, Connecticut, where he lived the rest of his life. He was a fixture at every May Day march until last year. He brought scores of his high school students to the anti-KKK march in Scotland, Conn., and remained passionately devoted to his communist principles and activities.

He and Ann were avid travelers, touring the world in places like China, Alaska, and Brazil, and taking camping vacations regularly to Maine and national parks nationwide where they developed an abiding interest in birding, leading them to the Audobon Society. In recent years he joined the fight to protect Bloomfield's water from exploitative corporate interests and became active in supporting hospital strikers in his area, selling them CHALLENGE, containing stories he had written about their struggle. In his last years he suffered from Parkinson's Disease but never lost his interest in the clarinet. He was heard playing it on the day before he died.

Comrade Mark Shapiro was one of many who devoted their lives to building the communist movement. While he is gone in body, the fruits of his labors will live on in the continuing efforts of revolutionary communists the world over to create a society that will liberate the working class from capitalist slavery. A toast to Comrade Mark, remembered forever!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from the capitalist press that might be of use for our readers

NYT=New York Times

GW= Guardian Weekly

Clinton-Obama-Trump prisons reap billion$ in profits off racism vs. Black and immigrant workers

NYT, 1/19 — Ten years…since…"The New Jim Crow" was published…[have witnessed a] rebirth of caste-like systems….of mass incarceration that locked millions of poor people and people of color in literal and virtual cages.

[The] nation's prison and jail population had quintupled in 30 years, leaving…the highest incarceration rate in the world. A third of black men had felony records — due…to a racially biased, brutal drug war — and were relegated to a permanent second-class status. Tens of millions of people in the United States had been stripped of basic civil and human rights, including…the right to be free of legal discrimination in employment, housing, education and basic public benefits….

White nationalist movements are operating openly online and in many of our communities; they're celebrating mass killings….

…In the 1980s and '90s, Democratic and Republican politicians leaned heavily on the racial stereotypes of "crack heads" [and] "crack babies"…to mobilize public support for the War on Drugs, a get-tough movement and a prison-building boom….

Today…the game remains the same. Public Enemy No. 1 in the 2016 election was a brown-skinned immigrant, an "illegal," a "terrorist"…

…Trump's claims were demonstrably false [but] did not impede his rise, just as facts were largely irrelevant at the outset of the War on Drugs….Back then…whites were equally likely, if not more likely, than people of color to use and sell illegal drugs [but] Black people were still labeled the enemy….Black people charged with possession of crack in inner cities were still punished more harshly than white people in possession of powder cocaine in the suburbs….

…Criminalization of immigration in the United States [has] result[ed] in a new class of "illegal immigrants" and "aliens" who are treated like "felons" or "criminals." Immigration violations…once treated as minor civil infractions are now crimes….routinely prompt one of the nation's most devastating sanctions — deportation….

Mass incarceration and mass deportation…both have expanded…because of the enormous profits to be made in controlling, exploiting and eliminating human beings….

....Electing a Democratic president or more Democratic politicians…like Bill Clinton only escalated this discrimination.

STALINGRAD: RED ARMY SMASHED THE FASCISTS



Soviet soldier waving the Red Banner over the central plaza of Stalingrad

February 2 is the 77th anniversary of the Battle of Stalingrad (1943), the turning point of World War II. It was when the communist Red Army defeated the Nazis, proving that fascism can be defeated.

The Bolsheviks organized the Soviet working class to build a mighty Red Army for the wars that they knew would come either from the fascists – Hitlerite Germany and militarist Japan – or from the big imperialist powers, Britain and France.

In June, 1941, the fascist German, Italian, and Finnish armies did invade the Soviet Union, with hundreds of thousands of troops from other fascist countries (Hungary, Spain, Rumania) and German-occupied countries (France, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Holland)

German Blitzkrieg gets unpleasant suprises

The German "Blitzkrieg" (lightening war) tactic was to punch through defense lines with paratroopers, tanks and mechanized infantry, and loop around, cut off, and capture the encircled enemy troops. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers were taken prisoner in the first few months. But many continued to fight, forming partisan bands behind the fascist lines.

On October 8, 1941 the Nazis announced: "For all military purposes, Soviet Russia is done with." But the Nazis had never met fighters like the Soviet troops. "The Russian troops ... [act] in striking contrast to the Poles and the Western Allies," wrote the Nazi commanding general. "Even when encircled, the Russians stood their ground and fought."

Stalingrad

The Nazis aimed an offensive south at Stalingrad, center of the critical remaining war production, and the southern oil fields. Without supplies, the Soviets would have to surrender. The Nazis drove the Red Army from the open fields into Stalingrad itself. Then the Nazis pushed into the city.

The Soviet 62nd Army fought to the death for literally every building in the city. Their orders from Supreme Headquarters were "Not one step back."

Their mission was to buy time for a counter-attack. Every day brought a new crisis. The Nazis had captured 80 percent of the city. The Bolsheviks based their defense on three large factories, a housing project, a hill, and a boat landing where supplies and reinforcements landed and wounded were evacuated. At their backs was the Volga River. On the far bank was their artillery support.

The Nazis pushed forward. The 62nd Soviet Army was cut in two. Chuikov, the Soviet commander of Stalingrad, then ordered his fighters into the factories themselves. Nazis and communists fought among mazes of machinery. Chuikov organized groups of six to eight with hand-to-hand combat training. The heroic workers continued production at the tank factory. They drove each newly built tank directly from the assembly line into battle.

Red Army launches attack

Finally, in January 1943, preparations for the counterattack were complete. The Red Army launched a counter-attack with over a million well-armed reserves striking from the north, west and south in huge pincers. Outflanking and outfighting the Nazis, they linked up, encircling the Nazis, who had encircled the 62nd Army.

On February 2, 1943, the Battle of Stalingrad ended, marking the turning point of World War II and the beginning of the end of the Nazis. Today as the imperialists prepare for more wars for oil and to re-divide the world, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is fighting to rebuild the international communist movement, this time to crush all the war makers with communist revolution:

Here [in Stalingrad], heavily outnumbered and outgunned, Soviet defenders fought battles house-to-house.

Continued on page 6